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ABSTRACT

The reading skill development of anglophone kindergarten children in French immersion programs in Canada is the subject of the two papers included in this document. The first paper describes a study that examined the English reading ability of both kindergarten and first grade children in immersion programs and compared the results with those of children in regular English classrooms. The paper concludes that children in both groups were equally knowledgeable at the beginning and end of kindergarten, that both groups gained competence in reading related skills over the year, and that children in the immersion program did not fall behind their peers in regular English classes. Copies of measures used in the study are appended to this paper. The second paper, a response by Mia Beer Toker, raises concerns about (1) the theoretical position and model of reading presented in the study and its environmental validity, (2) the comparability of the teaching approaches evaluated in the study, and (3) the question being addressed in the study--the nature of the skills being transferred from French to English reading. This paper concludes that education in Canada is at a point where it should be concerned with research that views reading as an interactive process, the purpose of which is to transfer meaning, rather than with the ability to manipulate specific, discrete skills. (FL)

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ENGLISH READING SKILLS OF KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE ONE FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS

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For more than 20 years, anglophone children in Canada have had the opportunity to learn French as a second language through French immersion programs. In a French immersion program, French is used in the classroom throughout the day; all communication and all instruction are provided in French. There are several types of immersion programs available which introduce children to French at different ages. This paper is concerned with children in early immersion programs, beginning in kindergarten.

One of the concerns of both parents and school officials has been whether anglophone children in French immersion programs, particularly those in early immersion, will achieve equal proficiency in English language arts as their peers in regular English classrooms. This questions has been the focus of various studies for more than a decade. When reading ability has been examined, researchers characteristically have found a large gap in ability between grade one French immersion students and their English peers, a slightly smaller gap between the two groups at the end of grade two, and, finally, no gap at the grade three or four level when approximately one hour per day of English language arts instruction is introduced to the French immersion students (Barik & Swain, 1978; Genesee, 1978; Gray, 1980; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Shapson & Day, 1982; Shapson & Kaufman, 1978; Swain, Lapkin & Andrew, 1981).

One of the reasons French immersion children catch up so quickly to their English peers when English is introduced is that they have been transferring on their own some of the reading skills learned in French to reading English (Day, 1978). Research which has examined their reading skill development typically has used standardized tests (e.g., Metropolitan Achievement Test). But standardized tests are not designed to show specifically what is being transferred by the children from reading French to reading English.

Researchers involved in such testing have, in fact, made this point. Tucker (1975), for example, in discussing the development of reading skills among grade one immersion students, has commented, "An inspection of the Experimental pupils' performance on the various section of the MAT was not particularly revealing" (p. 54). Genesee (1979) has also said, "We do not know . . . precisely what is being transferred" (p. 74).

In order to examine in more depth the development of children's reading skills, those factors important in learning to read must be specified. Chall (1979) has outlined a set of six reading stages in which she describes the knowledge and skills children acquire as they develop from beginning to fluent readers. Because only the first three are applicable to this study, only they will be described. They are: the Prereading Stage; Initial Reading or Decoding Stage; and Confirmation, Fluency, Ungluing from Print Stage.

In the Prereading Stage, birth to age six, more changes occur in children's knowledge than in any other stage. Children become competent users of language; develop necessary visual, visual-motor and auditory skills; and become familiar with letters, words and books.

In the second stage, the Initial Reading or Decoding Stage, the "essential aspect . . . is learning the arbitrary set of letters and associating these with the corresponding parts of spoken words" (p. 39). Biemiller (1970) has described three phases within this second stage. In the first, children rely on their language and experience to make use of syntactic and semantic context while they read; print is of only minor importance to them. In the second phase, the children focus their attention on print; as a consequence, any errors are graphically similar to the printed words but are also less acceptable semantically. In the third phase, children are able to integrate the graphic and semantic information while reading.

During Chall's third stage, termed Confirmation, Fluency, Ungluing from Print, children consolidate their skills and knowledge learned in the previous stages. Through extensive reading practice, children learn to combine their decoding skills with their syntactic and semantic knowledge and thus become rapid, fluent readers.

If Chall's reading stages are used as a guide, a test which examines the development of children's reading abilities would begin by focussing on the first two stages of reading which are primarily concerned with learning basic information about reading and developing word recognition abilities. As children gain confidence in word recognition, their ability to apply these skills to text and to comprehend, skills emphasized in the third stage, should also be considered.

While there is a large body of research in particular areas of reading (e.g., visual perception), there have been few developmental studies of reading. Resnick (1979) comments, "What is surprising is how little developmental knowledge we have of any aspects of reading" (p. 359). And, although, as previously mentioned, there is an extensive body of longitudinal research that follows groups of children through the first three or four grades of French immersion classes and compares their general achievement with that of their English peers, there is no research which has examined in a specific way the reading skill development of individual children in French immersion programs.

The present study was conceived as a longitudinal study of the reading skill development of children in kindergarten through grade three; this report describes the results of the kindergarten and grade one portions of the study. The ability to read English of a group of children in French immersion classrooms at the beginning and end of kindergarten and at the end of grade

one was compared with that of children in regular English classrooms in order to: 1) examine their reading skill development, and 2) to consider the transfer of reading skills acquired in French immersion classrooms to material written in the children's first language, English.

Subjects. Children, teachers, and parents from a school district near a large western Canadian city participated in the study. Data for the kindergarten portion of the study were obtained from two larger studies (Rauch, 1983; Kendall, Rauch, McNichol & Simmie, 1983). In the fall of 1982, all kindergarten children (N=628) in the school district were tested to examine specific skills and knowledge about reading acquired during early childhood (Rauch, 1983). A subgroup of these children (N=213) was retested in the spring of 1983 to identify instructional activities related to children's growth in reading skills and knowledge (Kendall, Rauch, McNichol & Simmie, 1983). For the present study, fall and spring data were available for the 52 children enrolled in the French immersion (FI) kindergartens. Fall and spring data were also available for a comparable group of children from regular English (ENG) kindergartens, identified by school district officials as having socioeconomic backgrounds (i.e., middle class) similar to the FI children. The FI children were drawn from three kindergarten classes in two schools, the ENG children from 4 classes at three other schools. A formal reading program was not used in any of the kindergarten classes; generally reading instruction was limited to teaching letter names and sounds and having children practice printing letters and their names.

For the grade one portion of the study, 46 of the FI children and 47 of the ENG children were still enrolled in their respective schools and could be retested. The FI children attended four different classes, and the ENG children attended seven different classes. The FI children used Le Sablier, a

code-emphasis reading program, and the ENG children used Ginn 720, a meaning-emphasis program which has a code-emphasis component which is often unrelated to the vocabulary used in the stories. All the grade one teachers were interviewed regarding their classroom practices in reading. A stratified random sample of parents was chosen to reflect the number of children in the sample from both the FI and ENG groups and to reflect the number of children from the 11 different classrooms at the five different schools. Twenty FI and 20 ENG parents were interviewed.

Instruments. A test was required which met two criteria. First, it had to cover the factors important in learning to read, as outlined by Chall's reading stages. Second, it had to be flexible enough to evaluate the children's reading development over a period of four years.

Mason (1980) developed the Letter and Word Reading Test (LWRT) to measure young children's beginning acquisition of reading following a developmental model of pre and beginning reading. An analysis of test content demonstrated that, as would be expected from that model, it measures factors in Chall's first three stages. Further, it may be used as published, or it may be modified by selecting items appropriate for the particular content domains. For both the kindergarten and grade one testing, a modified version of the LWRT was constructed.

The LWRT used at the beginning and end of kindergarten (LWRT-K) consisted of nine subtests. Six subtests, Label and Sign Identification, Spelling Common Words, Letter Name Identification, Reading Common Words, Consonant Sound Identification and Vowel Sound Identification describe children's letter, word and sound knowledge. The Label and Sign Identification and Reading Consonant Words Subtests were modified by Rauch (1983). The remaining four subtests were used as published by McCormick and Mason (1981). (See

Appendix A for LWRT-K.)

The other three subtests, Picture Story, Printing, and Book Handling were intended to provide descriptive information for those children who were unable to complete the first six subtests. Information from these three subtests is not reported here.

The LWRT used at the end of grade one (LWRT-1) was based on the LWRT-K but was modified so that it would illustrate clearly instances of transfer of French reading skills to English and would measure the range of reading abilities in the FI and ENG groups.

Four subtests from the LWRT-K were modified: Spelling Common Words, Reading Common Words, Consonant Sound Identification and Vowel Sound Identification (Chmilar, 1984). The other subtests were omitted because they were too elementary for grade one children. There were two subsections of the Reading Common Words Subtest: Fast Reading and Analysis. In the Fast Reading section, the children were told to read a list of 20 English words as fast as they could; if they could not read a word they were to say "skip it" and go on to read the next word. The Analysis section was given after the Fast Reading section. The children were asked to read the same list of words again, only this time they were told they could take as much time as they wanted to read the words. (See Appendix B for LWRT-1.)

To measure elements from Chall's third stage, children's silent reading comprehension and their oral reading and comprehension were evaluated. To evaluate silent reading comprehension, a Maze Test (Guthrie, 1973) was constructed using two passages from Getting the Facts (Boning, 1978). Both were at the grade one reading level according to Botel (1962). Each was typed in primary print.

To evaluate oral reading and comprehension, an Oral Reading and

Comprehension Test (ORC) was constructed using the Preprimer, Primer and Grade 1 selections from the Standard Reading Inventory, Form A (McCracken, 1966). A passage dependency check was done using five grade one children, judged to be good readers by their teacher. As a result, only one Preprimer level question had to be altered. Each passage was typed in primary print and laminated.

Five measures were obtained for each passage read: 1) reading rate, reported in words per minute; 2) word recognition errors (those oral reading errors which changed the meaning of the text); 3) total errors (the sum of word recognition errors and all other errors which did not change the meaning of the text - repetitions, self-corrections, pauses); 4) comprehension recall (that information about the story recounted by the children after they finished reading the passage which answered the required comprehension questions); 5) total comprehension (the sum of questions answered through recall and the children's answers to questions asked by the examiner about those questions not answered through recall).

Procedures. The LWRT-K, LWRT-1, and the ORC were administered individually by trained examiners in a quiet location outside the child's classroom. Each session was tape recorded so that responses and time taken to complete certain tasks could be recorded later. The Maze Test was adminstered to each grade one class. The children were given ten minutes to complete the test. The number of minutes taken to complete the test was recorded on each child's test paper by the researcher who administered the test.

The grade one teachers were interviewed in their classroom after their students had been tested. The parents of the grade one children were interviewed by phone during June and July.

RESULTS

A two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) of the scores from

the six subtests of the LWRT-K obtained at the beginning and end of kindergarten for the FI and ENG children revealed that there were no reliable differences between the FI and ENG groups, F (6,102) = 0.98, $p > .05$. As expected, there were reliable differences between pretest and posttest scores, F (6, 102) = 50.96, $p < .001$; univariate analyses showed that these differences existed between testing times for all six measures. As mean scores in Table 1 show, the children's scores were higher at posttest. The MANOVA also showed that there were no reliable interactions between groups and testing times, F (6, 102) = 1.77, $p > .05$.

A one-way MANOVA of children's responses on the LWRT-1 was performed on five scores. Two were derived from the Reading Common Words Subtest: 1) a Ratio of the number of correct words per minute, calculated by dividing the number of words read correctly by the fast reading time, and 2) Total Words Correct in the Analysis section. The ratio of number of correct words per minute serves as a good indication of the children's "relative proficiency or degree of automaticity" of decoding subskills (Adams, et al., 1980, p. 14). The other three scores used in the analysis were from the Spelling Common Words, Consonant Sound Identification, and Vowel Sound Identification Subtests.

Results showed a reliable difference between the FI and ENG groups, F (5,87) = 20.86, $p < .001$. Univariate analyses showed that reliable differences existed between the groups on all five measures. An examination of the mean scores showed that the ENG group scored reliably better than the FI group (See Table 2).

A one-way MANOVA on scores from the Maze Test showed that the FI and ENG groups' performance was reliably different, F (2,90) = 32.65, $p < .001$. The univariate analysis showed reliable differences between the groups on both

measures, with the ENG group completing the test more quickly and selecting nearly twice as many correct answers (See Table 3).

Because of a misunderstanding between the two examiners, two different sets of procedures were used to administer the Oral Reading and Comprehension Test (ORC). Under one set of procedures, the children were told only the title of the story and, while reading, were told proper names if needed; no other assistance was given. Thus the scores reflect the children's abilities only. Under the second set of procedures, if children made errors during oral reading or could not read a word at all, the examiner told them the correct word. In these cases the scores reflect the children's and examiner's abilities together. Since the purpose of the testing was to reflect only the children's abilities, data from children collected under the second set of procedures were not used; there were 16 FI and 11 ENG children in this group. Results reported for the ORC, then, are based on the 30 FI and 36 ENG children who took the test under the first set of procedures.

The ORC consisted of three graded passages. A child had to receive a Total Comprehension score of 60% or better to be asked to read the next, more difficult passage. As Table 4 shows, all the the ENG group read the Preprimer passage, and all scored 60% or better on Total Comprehension so also read the Primer passage. Only two scored below 60% on that passage; the other 34 read the grade 1 passage. Twenty-seven of the 30 FI children read the Preprimer passage; those 3 who did not either began but were asked to stop because they were having so much difficulty, or they were not asked to read it because the tester judged on the basis of their difficulty with the LWRT-1 that they would be unable to read it. Of those 27, only 12 did well enough on the Preprimer Total Comprehension to go on to read the Primer passage, and 10 of those read the Grade One passage.

To compare the FI and ENG children's performance on the ORC, three one-way multivariate analyses were done, one on each set of scores from each of the three oral reading passages administered. Multivariate analysis of the Preprimer scores showed there were reliable differences between the FI and ENG groups, (F (5,57) = 10.26, $p < .001$. The univariate analysis showed that reliable differences between the FI and ENG groups occurred on all the measures obtained from the Preprimer passage. An examination of the mean scores in Table 4 shows that the ENG group read the Preprimer passage better than the FI group. On the Primer passage which was read by only those children who successfully comprehended the Preprimer passage, the multivariate analysis showed no difference between the FI and ENG groups, F (5,42) = 1.89, $p > .05$. On the Grade One passage, the multivariate analysis again showed reliable differences between the FI and ENG groups, (F (5, 38) = 3.86, $p <$ .01. The univariate analysis of the scores from the Grade One passage show that a reliable difference is found between the groups on the Word Recognition Accuracy and the Total Comprehension sections (see Table 4).

A subgroup of 10 FI and 34 ENG children was able to read successfully the grade 1 oral reading passage with 60% or better Total Comprehension. These children, tested at the end of grade 1, demonstrated their ability to read Grade One material and thus were labelled "Good English Readers." Table 5 shows the results from the ORC for the 10 FI and 34 ENG "Good English Readers."

A one-way multivariate analysis was performed on the scores obtained by the "Good English Readers" on the LWRT-1. This analysis showed that there were reliable differences between the FI and ENG groups, F (5,38) = 4.49, $p <$ .01. Univariate analyses on the five measures examined showed that there were reliable differences between the groups on the Spelling Common Words Subtest,

F (,42) = 17.55, $p < .001$, and on the Vowel Sounds Identification Subtest, F (1,42) = 3.96, $p < .05$. Inspection of the mean scores showed that this difference was due to the better performance of the ENG group (see Table 6).

A multivariate analysis performed on Maze Test scores showed no difference between the FI and ENG "Good English Readers", F (2,41) = 1.94, p. > .05. Mean scores obtained by the FI and ENG groups on the Maze Test are shown in Table 7.

LaBerge and Samuels (1974) in their Model of Automaticity in Reading state that in the process of becoming a fluent reader, reading subskills become automatic and thus, the fluent reader needs to pay attention only to meaning. In contrast, children who are just learning to read must give a majority of their attention to decoding the visual symbols as their decoding subskills are not yet automatic. Both the FI and ENG children involved in this research are beginning readers. One would not expect many children in either group to have reached a level of automaticity in decoding subskills yet. One might also expect that, because the FI children are learning to read in French and do not have instructional time in reading English or practice in reading English at school, their decoding subskills may not be as proficient as those of the ENG group.

One way to measure the proficiency of decoding subskills, or level of automaticity, is through reading rate. A slower rate suggests that children are less proficient in decoding subskills and thus must pay closer attention to decoding the visual symbols. A faster rate suggests a greater proficiency of decoding subskills.

A comparison of the rate measures of the "Good English Readers" was done to ascertain whether a difference in the level of proficiency of decoding subskills existed between the "Good English Readers" in the FI and ENG

group. A MANOVA was done on Fast Reading Time from the LWRT-1 Reading Common Words Subtest and on the Oral Reading Rates from the Preprimer, Primer and Grade One passages. This analysis revealed no differences between the two groups on the four measures, $F(4,39) = 1.08$, $p. > .05$. Further, the analyses reported earlier of the groups' performance on the LWRT-1 revealed no difference on the Ratio of Correct Words per Minute (see Table 6) and no difference on total time to complete the Maze Test (see Table 7). These results suggest that the FI group of "Good English Readers" is as proficient in decoding subskills as the ENG group.

The results from the quantitative analyses reported above were not unexpected. Other studies (which used standardized group tests) have found that kindergarten immersion pupils show the same degree of readiness for reading as do children enrolled in a regular English kindergarten program (e.g., Shapson & Day, 1982) and that children in regular English classes read English better than French immersion grade one children (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1981). This current research reaffirms these findings. What is of more interest in this research is the strategies the FI group used to read English, for this issue has not been studied in previous research. The following section reports the results of a qualitative analysis of the grade one French immersion children's strategies on each of the subtests of the LWRT-1 and on the ORC and Maze Tests.

The Reading Common Words Subtest was devised to assess the children's English sight vocabulary. Qualitative analyses of their errors showed that approximately 62% result from their use of one of four strategies when reading those high frequency words:

1. Producing a French sounding word by using French decoding skills (36% of the errors) (e.g., MUCH /mʌtʃ/ as /myʃ /*)
2. Producing a real English word by decoding consonants correctly** (26% of the errors) and
   a) using the French vowel sound (i.e., WIDE as "WEED" /wi:d/).
   b) using the vowel letter name (i.e., BEST as "BEAST" /bi:st/).
   c) guessing at the vowel sound (i.e., WARM as "WORM" /wə:m/).

Only 5% of the errors were nonsense words; the children seemed to be aware that these were real English words and so either produced a response that they recognized as a real word or, in the case of 33% of the errors, did not give any response at all. (Interestingly, 37% of the ENG group's errors were also no-responses.)

Qualitative analyses of the FI group's errors in the Spelling Common Words Subtest suggest that there was significant transfer from French consonants to English consonants, and that there was significant interference on vowels (both in the CVC and CVCE spelling patterns) and on common consonant digraphs (H or C were used alone or in various combinations with T, S and C when spelling TH, SH or CH, suggesting that the children were aware that a special combination of letters is used in English to represent these sound,

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* An explanation of the way in which the stimuli and the children's responses will be reported is in order here. What the children see when reading aloud will be written in capital letters, i.e., MUCH; what the children read aloud will be written in capital letters with quotation marks i.e., "MOUCHE"; and, when appropriate, phonetic symbols will be given in slashes, i.e., / /

** Although there is a difference between how the consonants D, T, L and R are pronounced in French and English, only the differences in the pronunciations of R are focused on in this research. The differences between the French and English pronunciations of D, T, and L are not as obvious as R, and it was assumed that the children, when reading English words with these letters, would recognize the word even if they were using the French sound in their reading.

but they were not sure which pairs of letters to use for which digraphs). There were also instances where the children simply did not know which letters to choose (i.e., / ʌ /, / ŋ /and CVCE patterns) because the sound or pattern is not common to both languages; in these cases the FI group had no knowledge to transfer. Finally there were instances where the children appeared to have difficulty segmenting sounds within blends.

Qualitative analyses of the Consonant Sound Identification Subtest show that, as in the Spelling Common Words Subtest, single consonants transferred well from French to English. Again, errors on the consonant digraphs TH / θ / and CH /tʃ/ showed French interfering with English reading; and, again, other consonant digraphs (SH, NG) which were unfamiliar to the FI group, because they are not common to both languages or infrequently used in French, were incorrectly read as the children have had little or no practice reading them. The FI group also showed difficulties in blending together consonant sounds which are familiar as single elements.

Although the children knew they were reading make-believe English words, some other instances of the interference of French with English reading surfaced on this subtest. Some children did not pronounce the final consonant in a word, because that consonant would not be sounded in French (i.e., SHRAX as /ʃræ/). In other cases, the final consonants were sounded in an extremely exaggerated manner (i.e., MALD as /maldø/). Surfacing more often in this subtest than in the two previous subtests were reading C /K/ as /S/, the French "J" /ʒ/ for /dʒ/, and the uvular French "R".

The Vowel Sound Identification Subtest was the most difficult for both the ENG and FI groups; the FI children found it especially difficult, as indicated by the fact that their mean score was half that of the ENG group's (see Table 2). As would be predicted, the FI group read all vowels poorly

except those few letters and letter combinations which are pronounced similarly in French and English: A in the CVC pattern; OR and UR; U in the CVC pattern, OU and OW. O in the CVC pattern, although pronounced similarly in French and English, was not read well by the FI group.

The FI group appeared to use several different strategies for reading the vowel sounds tested, but they used no one strategy consistently. It appeared that, with a few exceptions, they were unfamiliar with decoding vowels. However, even if they could decode the vowel sounds using French decoding strategies, this would often produce an incorrect English response as the vowel sounds are very different.

Qualitative analyses of the oral reading strategies of those 15 FI children who could not read further than the Preprimer passage revealed 40% who read the passage as if it were French rather than English text. For example, one child read MOTHER LOOKED UP as /moti:iar lu:kəd yp /. These children read with a French accent and used French decoding skills. Other children in the FI group who found it very difficult to read the Preprimer passage attempted to use the initial letter in a word to produce an English word; this usually resulted in an incorrect response which rarely made sense. For example, one FI child read I SEE SOMETHING YOU PLAY WITH, SAID MOTHER as "I SIT SO MUCH YOU PLAY WILL, SO OH MUM."

Those children who were able to read beyond the Preprimer passage produced the kinds of English decoding errors seen in the previous LWRT-1, those due to inappropriate transfer of French decoding skills to English words. French decoding particularly interfered in reading the vowels U and I and in reading the consonant digraphs TH and CH. Thus, UP was often read as /yp /, WITH was often read as /wi:t/ and CHILDREN was read as /ʃi:ldæ̃ /.

The Maze Test appeared to be too difficult for many of the FI group.

Fifty percent used the maximum time, 10 minutes, to do the task, whereas only one child in the ENG group required the full time. And, although many of the FI group took the maximum time, 28% of their responses in the second half of the test were omissions compared to only 7% omissions by the ENG group on the second half.

Qualitative analyses of the strategies used by the ten "Good English Readers" in the FI group were also done. There were two subtests of the LWRT-1 where reliable differences were found between the FI and ENG groups. In the Spelling Common Words Subtest, analyses revealed many of the same errors seen in the total FI group. Particularly, these 10 FI children found it difficult to spell certain consonant blends, the consonant digraphs, and the CVCE pattern. Some of this group's spelling errors resulted from their reading instruction in French interfering with their English spelling (i.e., SHINE as CHINE), but more often their errors resulted from an unfamiliarity with encoding an English spelling pattern (i.e., the CVCE pattern).

Analyses of the Reading Vowel Sounds Subtest showed that these children seem to be more consistent in the strategies they used to read vowel sounds than the total FI group. Errors usually resulted from the children pronouncing the make-believe words as French words, reading a word in the CVCE pattern as if it were in the CVC pattern, or sounding out each letter of a digraph or diphthong.

Qualitative analyses of the FI "Good English Readers" errors in oral reading showed that these 10 children who were able to read the grade one English passage made errors one would expect from good readers (Weber, 1970). Their errors generally resulted from the children using syntactic and semantic information to predict an upcoming word, misreading the actual word because of their predictions, and then self-correcting.

Teacher interviews. The four FI and seven ENG teachers were interviewed about their language arts activities. All the ENG and all but one FI teacher read aloud to their class in the language of instruction. One FI teacher did not read aloud because she felt the vocabulary in a French story was too advanced for her children. Two of the FI teachers occasionally read to their class in English because the children requested it. One FI class exchanged with an ENG grade one class in the school twice a week for stories in English.

All the children used the school library. In one FI school the children borrowed French books only, one per week, while in the other FI school the children borrowed one French and one English book per week.

Only one of the FI classes did not have a silent reading period in their classroom. Three of the ENG classes did not have a scheduled silent reading period, but these teachers reported that their classes read silently everyday. All other FI and ENG classes had silent reading periods every day in the language of instruction.

There was less emphasis on writing in the FI classrooms than in the ENG. Three FI teachers had their children compose sentences once or twice each week, and two of those teachers had a small group of children who wrote stories once a week. One FI teacher worked on printing but did not have her children composing. Six of the ENG teachers had their classes write daily journals, and four of them also had the children write stories occasionally. Only one ENG teacher reported that the children in her class did not wirte very often.

None of the FI teachers gave help or instruction in either reading or writing in English. As one teacher said, "This is French immersion. They get English all the time outside of school.

Parent interview. A random sample of 20 parents from each of the FI and

ENG groups was interviewed over the telephone to determine if there were any differences between their attitudes about reading or in how they helped their children with reading.

All but one FI parent read aloud to her/his child. The one parent who did not read aloud used to do so but now her child is an independent reader and reads for himself. Sixty-five percent of the FI parents read aloud daily, and 30% said they read aloud on most days. Of the parents who read to their children, 42% read only in English, 16% read only in French, and 42% read in both languages.

Of the ENG parents, 80% read aloud to their children. Of those parents who did not read aloud, only one parent used to do so but did not any longer because her child read independently now. The other 3 parents said they did not read aloud to their children.

Only 37% of the ENG parents read aloud everyday to their child; 25% read aloud most days, 19% read aloud about twice a week and 19% rarely read aloud.

Forty-five percent of the FI parents said their child read at home; of these, 66% read only English books, 22% read only French books, and 12% read books in both languages. Forty percent said their child read only a little at home because their child was just beginning to learn how to read; none read only English books, 37% read French books, and 63% read books in both languages. Fifteen percent of the FI parents said their children did not read at home because they did not know how to read, but they added that their child did look at books.

Ninety percent of the ENG groups' parents said their child read at home. Only 10% said their child only read a little.

The majority of parents in both groups used the public library with their child. Of the FI parents, 60% used it often, 10% used it rarely, and 30% did

not use the public library at all. Of those who used it, 58% said they borrowed only English books, 42% said they borrowed both French and English books, and no parents in the FI group borrowed only French books. Of the ENG parents, 55% used the library often, 5% used it rarely, and 40% never used the public library with their child.

The majority of parents in both groups said they helped their child with reading. Of the FI parents, 80% helped their child a lot, 5% a little and 15% did not help their children with reading. When asked why they did not help their children with reading the parents said their child was "not keen" on reading, did not need help because he could read himself now, or because their child was not reading yet and so they could not help yet, but that they did continue to read aloud to their child.

Of the ENG parents, 80% said they helped their child a lot with reading, 15% helped a little, and 5% did not help their children with reading. The parent who did not help her child with reading did not feel she needed to because her child was an independent reader.

Most parents in both groups helped their child with reading by helping to sound out words, or by telling the correct word if their child could not sound it out.

The majority of FI parents who helped their child to read helped in English (52%). Only 18% of the parents helped their child only in French, and 30% helped their child in both languages. At one FI school, parents were urged not to teach their children how to read English at home to avoid confusing the children. Perhaps even more of the FI parents would have helped their child to read English if this request had not been made.

DISCUSSION

Educators have assumed that one important purpose of kindergarten is the development of reading readiness. Thus it follows that there may be some concern for children in French immersion kindergartens; are they missing certain important experiences which would contribute to their readiness for reading? Previous research using standardized achievement tests has shown that children in FI kindergartens are as "ready" to learn to read as are children in regular English kindergartens (e.g., Shapson & Day, 1982; Shapson & Kaufman, 1978). The present research extends these findings using results from an individually-administered test which examined in some depth specific reading skills and knowledge of children in FI and ENG classes. Both groups of children were shown to be equally knowledgable at the beginning and end of kindergarten. Both groups of children gained competence in reading-related skills over the year; those children in FI classes did not fall behind their peers in regular ENG classes.

Previous research has documented the fact that FI children do not read English as well as their English-instructed peers once formal reading instruction begins in grade one. But previous studies have not been able to describe in any detail the reading skills and knowledge of FI children: what skills and knowledge about reading English do they possess, and what additional skills and knowledge must they acquire?

The FI children's errors on the LWRT-1 clearly show that elements of their French reading skills are appropriate to transfer to English reading and that other elements interfere with their English reading. This research shows that single consonant sounds transfer well from reading French to reading English, that A in the CVC pattern, U in the CVCE pattern and the vowel combinations UR, OR, OU and OW, transfer well from French to English. On the

other hand, significant interference from French reading instruction to reading English occurs on the consonant digraphs SH, TH, and CH; the single consonant sounds R, X, and J; and on I and U in the CVC pattern. These elements interfered even when the FI children who were "Good English Readers" read make-believe or real words out of context.

In fact, those elements of French reading which actually interfere with English reading are very few and, in themselves, are not enough to explain all the difficulties observed here. The performance of the three groups of FI children who had problems reading English, and some of the "Good English Readers", also seemed to be affected by a lack of knowledge of certain reading skills. For example, these children were poor at blending consonant sounds, they were not sure of the sound represented by O in the CVC pattern, and, in spelling, they had some difficulty segmenting sounds within blends. These skills, common to both French and English, will improve through instruction and practice in French, and this improvement should be reflected in the FI children's English reading performance.

There are, of course, English reading skills that some FI children will not have, even when they do become good French readers. These skills are not common to French and English, and to read English well the children will need to be taught these skills (i.e., the CVCE pattern, certain vowel sounds). Also, of course, to read English well, the children will need to be aware of those elements of French described earlier which interfere with reading English.

The qualitative analyses suggest that these FI children can be classified into four groups on the basis of their English reading skills and knowledge: the "Good English Readers", the French-decoders, the French-English decoders, and the nonresponders.

About a quarter of the FI children tested here generally read English very well, using English reading strategies very much like those used by the ENG group. These "Good English Readers" primarily used English reading strategies when reading familiar and unfamiliar words presented in context. However, when reading real or make-believe words in isolation, some interference from their French decoding skills was seen. This group of FI children are learning to distinguish when and for what materials their French decoding skills are appropriate and when their English decoding skills should be used.

As expected, other children in the FI group (approximately one-fifth) used only French decoding strategies to read English materials. When reading English words aloud they pronounced them as French words. These children are "French-decoders." Unlike the "Good English Readers" who can use both French and English reading strategies, these children appear only to be able to use French reading strategies.

A third group of FI children, the French-English decoders, seemed to be using a combination of French and English reading strategies to read English materials (about one-third). This group can be distinguished from the second group by their linguistic insight that reading in English requires responses that sound like English and from the first group by the fact that their English reading skills are not as advanced as those of the "Good English Readers." While what they read sounded like English, they rarely read the corect English word because they were forced to supplement their limited English reading skills with their French skills.

The final group of FI children (about one-sixth) usually gave no response. These children had very poor French reading skills. They could not use those skills when reading English materials because they had difficulty

using French skills on French materials. They seemed to have few reading strategies to use.

There are important instructional implications for that group of French immersion children who are "Good English Readers" and those French Immersion children who are not. When these children reach grade 3, the grade when English reading instruction is introduced in the school district involved here, one would expect that these two ability groups would still exist. One would also expect that the number of children who are in the group of "Good English Readers" would increase. At this grade level, then, if these two groups of FI children's instructional needs are to be met, each group will require substantially different English Language Arts instruction.

The teacher interviews showed that with the exception of the amount of writing done, the FI and ENG classes are very similar. All the classes but one FI class read silently daily in their language of instruction; all the classes used the school library; and all teachers, except one FI teacher, read daily to their class.

Because researchers have questioned whether parental involvement in the reading process has facilitated the transfer of reading skills from French to English (Edwards, 1976; Barik & Swain, 1976; Cummins, 1977; Genesee, 1979), this research has attempted to identify, through parent interviews, some features of this parental involvement. The parent interviews did show an interesting difference between the FI and ENG groups: FI parents read to their children more often than ENG parents. In fact, all FI parents, except one whose child was an independent reader, regularly read aloud to their children, and usually in English. Most FI parents helped their children with English reading skills at home, even though one FI school asked parents not to do so. Also, many FI children practice reading English at home. For some

children, the "Good English Readers", this practice appears to have been substantial, as they have reached the same level of proficiency in their decoding subskills as those "Good English Readers" in the ENG group.

A unique feature of an early immersion program like that described here is that children in the primary grades are first taught to read and write in French rather than in their native language, English. This feature of early French immersion programs seems to contradict recommendations (e.g., Mondiano, 1966, 1972; Gray, 1969) that initial reading instruction should be in a child's native language. However, their recommendations concern a very different group of children than those who participate in early French immersion programs in Canada; instead, they concern minority language children whose native language is considered a "low-prestige" language (Genesee, 1979). In school, these children would generally be taught the majority or "high-prestige" language. In this case, transfer of reading skills from the language of instruction to the minority native language would be highly unlikely as there is little status accorded such a transfer by the community or school, and so literacy in one's native language would rarely be achieved. Thus, if children are to maintain their native language skills, it is recommended that initial instruction in reading be given in their first language.

This is not the case with these FI children. These children are native majority language users, and their native language, English, is a "high-prestige" language; it is highly unlikely that they will not be encouraged to become literate in English as well as in French. In fact, after initial reading instruction is introduced in French and a significant level of competence is achieved in reading French, the children are instructed in English reading skills at school. This is not the case with children of

minority or "low-prestige" language groups.

This paper has described the first stages in the English reading skill development of a group of anglophone children in FI classrooms; an examination of their French reading strategies is beyond the scope of this study. Four aspects of their English reading development were identified. First, the FI children already transfer directly certain French reading skills (e.g., many consonant sounds) to reading English. Second, other French reading skills are seen to interfere (e.g., some digraphs). In order to read English well the FI children must distinguish between these two sets of skills. Third, there are certain generic skills (e.g., blending) that apply to both languages that the FI children have not learned. Fourth, there are certain skills specific to English (e.g., CVCE pattern) that most FI children do not know.

A further examination of these children's English reading skill development at the end of grade two is presently underway; testing will also be done at the end of grade three to complete the description of the development of English reading skills of anglophone children in early French immersion classrooms.

Table 1

LWRT-K Pretest and Posttest Scores, French Immersion and English Groups

Variable	French Immersion (N=52)				English (N=57)			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	X	S.D.
Label and Sign Ident. (maximum = 30)	7.73	7.27	12.90	9.05	6.60	6.81	12.32	8.70
Spelling Common Words (maximum = 11)	3.48	3.58	7.15	3.46	2.46	3.11	6.83	3.49
Letter Name Indent. (maximum = 20)	13.60	5.54	17.12	4.14	12.39	6.56	17.82	3.45
Reading Common Words (maximum = 20)	1.44	3.60	3.96	5.02	1.40	4.14	3.97	5.78
Consonant Sound Indent. (maximum = 32)	8.08	10.1	21.52	10.51	5.93	9.86	18.03	10.62
Vowel Sound Ident.	1.02	2.39	1.98	3.20	.35	1.42	2.21	3.62

Table 2

Results from the LWRT-1

	Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)	
	FI n=46	ENG n=47
Reading Common Words		
Fast Reading		
Ratio of correct words per minute	15.64 (35.81)	51.07 (41.51)
Time (seconds)	56.78 27.78	25.47 14.52
Total Words Correct	5.15 6.48	14.30 4.48
Analysis of Common Words (max. 20)	8.00 (6.95)	16.62 (3.02)
Spelling Common Words (max. 37)	23.59 (6.03)	33.13 (3.05)
Consonant Sound Ident. (max. 60)	39.61 (14.09)	53.62 (5.06)
Vowel Sound Ident. (max. 26)	8.26 (4.86)	16.26 (5.06)

Table 3

Maze Test Results; Means, Standard Deviations, Univariate F's, and Range

	Mean Score (Standard Deviations)		
	FI n=46	ENG n=47	F
Total Score (max. 15)	6.6 (4.7)	12.3 (2.5)	54.33*
Total Time (max. 10 min.)	7.98 (2.42)	4.98 (2.32)	37.31*
Range	0 - 15	5 - 15	

* $p < .001$

Table 4

Results from Oral Reading and Comprehension Test; Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F's

(FI, n=30, ENG, n=36)

	Preprimer Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)			Primer Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)			Grade One Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)		
	FI n=27	ENG n=36	F (df=1,61)	FI n=12	ENG n=36	F (df=1,46)	FI n=10	ENG n=34	F (df=1,42)
Rate (WPM)	38.26 (39.33)	95.69 (37.67)	34.54*	69.08 (44.19)	95.31 (45.05)	3.08	67.90 (43.28)	85.15 (43.39)	1.22
Word Recognition Accuracy	65% (15.42)[a]	99% (1.12)	37.23*	95% (5.17)	99% (1.69)	6.12	97% (2.87)	99% (1.19)	6.81 *
Total Accuracy	54% (17.41)[a]	96% (1.59)	45.69*	90% (6.84)	94% (3.97)	2.59	89% (7.21)	94% (4.47)	2.54
Recall Comprehension	32% (1.84)[b]	60% (1.55)	10.26*	37% (1.92)	37.0% (1.68)	.002	51% (2.07)	52% (1.57)	.05
Total Comprehension	50% (2.22)[b]	95% (.48)	35.07	76% (1.92)	84% (1.31)	2.47	87% (1.41)	78.8% (1.04)	4.05 *

* $p < .05$

[a] Standard deviations for Word Recognition and Total Accuracy represent numbers of errors made (Preprimer: 47 words; Primer: 65 words; Grade One: 69 words).

[b] Standard deviations for Recall and Total Comprehension represent numbers of questions answered correctly (Preprimer: 5 questions; Primer and Grade One: 10 questions).

Table 5

Results from the Oral Reading and Comprehension Test, "Good English Readers", Mean Scores and Standard Deviations

	Preprimer		Primer		Grade One	
	Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)		Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)		Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)	
	FI n=10	ENG n=34	FI n=10	ENG n=34	FI n=10	ENG n=34
Rate (WPM)	76.6 (42.54)	98.35 (36.85)	77.30 (43.95)	98.65 (44.06)	67.90 (43.28)	85.15 (43.39)
Word Recognition Accuracy	97% (1.72)[a]	99% (.82)	98% (1.40)	99% (.90)	97% (2.87)	99% (1.19)
Total Accuracy	93% (3.63)[a]	97% (1.28)	93% (3.66)	95% (3.14)	89% (7.21)	94% (4.47)
Recall Comprehension	74% (1.25)[b]	60% (1.59)	41% (1.66)	38% (1.68)	51% (2.07)	52% (1.57)
Total Comprehension	98% (.32)[b]	96% (.39)	82% (1.40)	86% (1.05)	87% (1.41)	78.8% (1.04)

[a] Standard deviations for Word Recognition and Total Accuracy represent number of errors made (Preprimer: 47 words; Primer: 65 words; Grade One: 69 words).

[b] Standard deviations for Recall and Total Comprehension represent numbers of questions answered correctly (Preprimer: 5 questions; Primer and Grade One: 10 questions).

Table 6

Results from the Reading and Decoding Test, "Good English Readers", Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Univariate F's

	Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)		F
	FI n=10	ENG n=34	
Ratio of Correct Words per minute	50.27 (60.65)	54.78 (43.49)	.07
Analysis (max. 20)	17.00 (3.27)	16.89 2.99)	.01
Spelling Common Words (max. 37)	28.00 (4.97)	33.35 (3.05)	17.55*
Reading Consonant Sounds (max. 60)	52.90 (3.92)	54.12 (5.03)	.49
Reading Vowel Sounds (max. 26)	12.30 (4.74)	15.82 (4.97)	3.96*

* $p < .05$, df = 1, 42.

Table 7

Maze Test Results for "Good English Readers":
Means and Standard Deviations

	Mean Scores (Standard Deviations)	
	FI n=10	ENG n=34
Total Time (max. 10 minutes)	6.20 (2.86)	4.50 (2.30)
Total Score (max. 15 minutes)	11.20 (5.20)	12.56 (2.16)

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Name of child:_____ Tester:_____

Name of teacher:_____ Date:_____

A.M. or P.M.:_____

School:_____

---

1) Picture Identification. Show child pictures one at a time until 10 are correctly identified. Check correct response. Write in incorrect response.

1. Jello____	6. Dog ____	11. Smarties ____
2. Stop ____	7. Crest ____	12. McDonald's____
3. Exit ____	8. Rice ____	13. Cherrios ____
4. Milk ____	9. Kool Aid____	14. Coca Cola ____
5. Book ____	10. Corn ____	15. Pepsi ____

(Spelling Common Words)

2) Common Word Spelling. Place letters in front of child. Ask child to make the listed words. Check if correct. Write out incorrect response. Score by counting the number of letters placed in the correct position of each word.

letters: T P C A O S K

Words to spell:

CAT	_____	_____
TOP	_____	_____
AT	_____	_____
POT	_____	_____
	Total	_____

.../2

3) Letter Name Identification. Show each letter and ask the child to name the letter. Check correct response. Write in incorrect response.

R__ P__ H__ R__ A__ D__ T__ M__ E__ B__ ☐ Total Correct

b__ e__ m__ t__ d__ a__ f__ h__ p__ r__ ☐ Total Correct

(Picture Story)

4) Stop Story. Ask child to read the words as you turn pages. Check if correct. Write in incorrect response.

Stop car ___ ___

Stop truck ___ ____

Stop bus ___ ___

Stop. Stop. Stop. ___ ___ ___

Stop for the cat. ___ ___ ___ ___

Do you think child is guessing? _____

(Reading Common Words)

5) Common Word Identification. In this order, show child one word at a time -- ask child to read it. Check if correct. PRINT in incorrect response. If child gets more than 7 correct, do 5a and 5 b. If less than 7, go on to 6.

day ____	cow ____	eye ____	he ____	
bed ____	girl ____	dog ____	box ____	
leg ____	man ____	pig ____	car ____	☐ Total Correct
sun ____	boy ____	red ____	toy ____	
up ____	top ____	no ____	go ____	

5a) Child listens while tester reads all words but those in red. Child fills in words in red. Check correct response. Print in incorrect response.

It is summer on the farm.

The dog is on his bed. ___ ___

The sun is up in the sky. ___ ___

His leg is over his eye. ___ ___ ☐ Total Correct

Both the pig and the cow look hot. ___ ___

The pig takes a drink from the dog's red dish. ___

Will he save some for the dog? No. ___

.../3

5b) Today is the big day. ____

It is Peter's birthday party.

The ice cream man comes with goodies. ____

One boy gives Peter a car. ____ ____

Another girl gives him a big chocolate egg. ____ ____ ☐ Total Correct

His sister gives him a crayon box. ____

Peter's favourite toy is a spinning top. ____ ____

It sure can go fast. ____

6) Consonant Sound Idenfication. Ask child to read aloud the make believe words. Ignore the vowel sound; check correct response (2 consonant sounds). Write down incorrect response. (G can be either jar or gum sound).

bak ____	zad ____	fac ____	gan ____
pav ____	tab ____	lam ____	sar ____
daz ____	jap ____	ras ____	nal ____
kaj ____	vat ____	maf ____	cag ____

Go on to vowels only if child did better than 5/16 with consonants.

7) Vowel Sound Idenfication. Ask child to read make believe words. Ignore consonant pronunciation. Check if vowel sound is correct. Write down incorrect response.

bek ____	nābe ____	voy ____	kore ____
bik ____	nībe ____	vay ____	kere ____
bak ____	nūbe ____	vee ____	kire ____
bok ____	nebe ____	vait ____	kare ____
buk ____	nobe ____	voit ____	kure ____

If child did well on the test, start with standard format. If child did poorly on test, start with logo format. If child who did well on test but poorly on standard format (less that 5) go on to logo format.

(Label and Sign Identification)

1b) Word Identification. Using cards that match pictures identified in 1a, show one at a time and ask child to read. Check correct response. Write incorrect response.

STANDARD FORMAT

1. Jello	_____	6. Dog	_____	11. Smarties	_____
2. Stop	_____	7. Crest	_____	12. Pepsi	_____
3. Exit	_____	8. Rice	_____	13. Cherrios	_____
4. Milk	_____	9. Kool Aid	_____	14. Coca Cola	_____
5. Book	_____	10. Corn	_____	15. McDonald's	_____

LOGO FORMAT

1. JELL-O	_____	6. DOG	_____	11. Smarties	_____
2. STOP	_____	7. Crest	_____	12. PEPSI	_____
3. EXIT	_____	8. Rice	_____	13. Cheerios	_____
4. MILK	_____	9. Kool Aid	_____	14. Coca Cola	_____
5. BOOK	_____	10. CORN	_____	15. McDonald's	_____

(Printing)

8a) Hand child a piece of paper and pencil. Ask:

1. Can you print your name?
2. Can you print any other words?
3. If can't print words - then 2 letters.

(Book Handling)

8b) Hand child book upside down. Check if child puts right side up _____. Ask:

1. Show me the beginning_____, middle_____, end_____ of book.
2. Show me the first word____, last word_____.
3. Show me the top of book_____, bottom of book_____.
4. Show me the title of the book_____.
5. Show me page 5_____.

FRENCH ENGLISH

CHILD_____ SEX: M F

TEACHER_____ TESTER_____

SCHOOL_____ DATE_____

INSTRUCTIONS:

I am going to ask you to read some words in English for me today. I'm going to tape it and I will be writing some things down while you are reading.

1. COMMON WORD IDENTIFICATION

A. I am going to give you a list of some English words to read. I want you to read them as fast as you can. If you can't read the word say "skip it" and then read the next one. I don't want you to try to sound the words out now. You can do that later. I will show you what I want you to do: Examiner reads another list of words quickly inserting 3 or 4 "skip its". (skip "day").

B. Analysis and Word Meaning

Now I am going to ask you to read the words again. This time you don't have to be quick; you can sound them out if you need to. After you have read a word I want you tell me what the word means.

Example: You read "cat" and then you could say "animal", "dog", "fluffy", or "My cat says meow." Now read this word "no". What could you say to show me that you know what that word means?

(If the child's meaning response is not complete but not incorrect ask the child to tell you more; i.e., I have a cat.)

	FAST READING	ANALYSIS	MEANING RESPONSE
DAY			
COW			
GIRL			
HE			
BOX			
CAR			
TOY			
EYE			
BEST			
MUCH			
OVER			
THINK			
AGAIN			
LONG			
WIDE			
CHANGE			
WARM			
ROUND			
LIGHT			
ONLY			

TOTAL CORRECT____ TOTAL CORRECT____ TOTAL CORRECT___

POSSIBLE 20 TIME_____

2. SPELLING COMMON WORDS

Here are all the letters of the alphabet and one extra of each of these letters (point to vowels.) I am going to ask you to spell some words using these letters. Make the words right here (point to working space paper). (Use CAT as an example. Check if correct. Write out incorrect response.)

HEM _____	FRAME _____
CHOP _____	MULE _____
THUMP _____	STRING _____
SLOPE _____	SHINE _____

POSSIBLE 37

TOTAL CORRECT _____

3. READING CONSONANT SOUNDS

Now here are some make-believe English words which I want you to read. You can sound them out to help you read them. (Check if correct. Write out incorrect response.)

(3) BLASH _____	(3) VACT _____
(3) HAPT _____	(2) YAPH _____
(3) JANK _____	(2) KNAJ _____
(3) MALD _____	(4) DRANT _____
(3) SWAV _____	(4) STRAF _____
(4) THRAMP _____	(3) CHASK _____
(2) WRANG _____	(2) PHALL _____
(3) GRACK _____	(3) ZAST _____
(4) CLAND _____	(2) WHATH _____
(3) SHRAX _____	(4) SPLAB _____

POSSIBLE 60 TOTAL CORRECT _____

4. READING VOWEL SOUNDS

Here are some more make-believe English words for you to read. Again you can sound them out. (Check correct response. Write out incorrect response.)

VEB _____	PABE _____	MOY _____	NIR _____	FOUP _____
VIB _____	PIBE _____	MAY _____	NOR _____	FEAP _____
VAB _____	PUBE _____	MEE _____	NER _____	FOW _____
VOB _____	PEBE _____	MAIT _____	NAR _____	FAW _____
VUB _____	POBE _____	MOIT _____	NUR _____	FOOP _____
				FOAP _____

POSSIBLE 26

TOTAL CORRECT _____

ORAL READING AND COMPREHENSION

Pre-Primer

John

"I want to play" said John.
"I want something to play with."
Mother looked up. Mother looked
down. "I see something you play
with," said Mother. "It is red
and blue. It is not little."
John looked. "I see it," said
John. "It is a big ball."

(47 words)

WORD RECOGNITION ERRORS_____

TOTAL ERRORS _____

TIME_____

WPM_____

_____What did John want?

_____How did Mother help?

_____What did Mother see?

_____What did it look like?

_____What did John see?

comprehension unaided_____

total comprehension_____

Primer

A Trip

The children are at school.
They are going to a farm.
Mr. White is going, too.
They went on the school bus.
"I see the barn," said Jack.
"I see a cow," said one of
the children. "There is a
black horse," said Mary.
"Can I go for a ride?" "No,"
said Mr. White. "You will see
the horse. But you can not ride it."

(65 words)

WORD RECOGNITION ERRORS_____

TOTAL ERRORS_____

TIME_____

WPM_____

____Where are the children?
____Where are they going?
____Who is going with them?
____How did they go?
____What did Jack see?
_____What did one child see?
____What did Mary see?
____What did Mary want?
____Would Mary get a ride?
____What did Mr. White say?

comprehension unaided_____

Total comprehension_____

Grade 1

Bill

Bill had a toy cat. He took it outside to play. Night came. Bill did not bring in his toy cat. It rained that night. The next day Bill looked for his cat. "Mother," he called. "I lost my cat. Will you help me?"

"Where do you think it is?" said Mother. Bill did not know.

"Let's look outside," said Mother. Bill found his toy cat in the street. (69 words)

WORD RECOGNITION ERRORS_____

TOTAL ERRORS_____

TIME_____

WPM_____

____What did Bill have?

____What did he do?

____What did he forget?

____What happened that night?

____What happened the next day?

_____What did he ask his mother?

_____What did Mother say?

_____Where did Bill think his toy was?

_____Where did Mother say to look?

_____Where did Bill find it?

Comprehension unaided_____

Total Comprehension_____

COLLOQUIUM ON RESEARCH IN READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS IN CANADA.

The University of Lethbridge

Response to the paper by Kendall et al., "English Reading Skills of Kindergarten and Grade One French Immersion Students", 1984

By Mia Beer Toker

Universite de Montreal

June 1984

Learners in French Immersion Programs: Clarifying the Questions and Specifying the Dimensions.

The authors, Kendall, Chilira, Shapson, and Shapson, must be complemented on their choice of topic--learners in French immersion programs. It is relevant even more so today as more researchers, educators, and parents become involved in these programs, given the annually increasing French immersion enrollments across all Canadian provinces. As well, I commend the choice of a longitudinal study, a costly commitment. This is a good example of a laboratory type study, quite neatly evaluated and clearly presented.

However, from a research and professional standpoint I have some basic concerns in three areas.

My first concern is regarding the theoretical position and model of reading that is presented and its environmental validity.

This paper defines reading as having sequential, discrete components, and views surface level accuracy as representing transfer from one mode--print--to another--understanding. While this may be a convenient and historically not unpopular way to describe this activity, I have some serious questions.

Is this really called reading? A majority of researchers in France subscribe to this view. One accepted definition of reading by the IRA is "sounding out print". Yet, pronouncing accurately is not a guarantee of understanding. Accurate oral response and word attack in reading is a very small part of the whole language act--and far from sufficient for communicative effectiveness--since we know there are many children who are comprehending text, manipulating the deep structure, yet who don't necessarily sound good, and would make poor radio "news" announcers! If we could demonstrate that vowel errors, etc. clearly prevent or destroy understanding, then it would be significant to evaluate the accuracy of vowel, consonant digraph, etc. pronunciation as separate components. Kolers (1969) reports experimental results that establish quite clearly that word recognition does not require identification of each of the letters in a word--recognition being a constructive process and not a reproductive one. His examples of bilingual readers on "mixed (English and French) text" are particularly appropriate to explain why the specific tasks (subskills) offered these F1 children are not informative.

If we are concerned about children and their participation in the communication act through language and wish to describe one aspect--Reading--it is imperative to place reading, even reading in L2, within a cognitive interactive model. In such a

model, Reading is viewed as a complex task--somewhat like any other language task--learned and effected, not sequentially, but with one objective, meaning, with the learner's efforts to constantly better his approximations in producing and receiving language embodying this meaning. Since these approximations are made from information coming from a great store of cues and information systems, analyses of the accuracy scores could not possibly tap all other efforts, attitudes, etc. involved in producing this response.

My second concern is related to the comparability of the teaching approaches being evaluated.

While the authors note the program content of the F1 and ENG. Kindergarten groups to be similar in a general way, each of these two groups of teachers could be operating within very different approaches--pre-Ginn 720 as compared with pre-Sablier, since each must be aware of the sequence of the entire program within which he/she teaches. In the grade 1 groups, clearly the two programs are not perfectly comparable. As reported in the paper, the Ginn 720 is literature based and has a strong meaning emphasis with a phonics component, as compared with Le Sablier, a code-emphasis program. The paper notes that parents "help to sound out" unknown words, again underlining the strategy expected. Certainly the message beginning readers receive as to

how to play the "reading game" in each of these approaches adds the crucial variable that has been clearly overlooked.

If we want to know about transfer from one code to another with similar orthography--then one would study the results of two equivalent code-emphasis approaches.

If, on the other hand, we want to know about transfer--as a phenomenon--and to compare how each approach facilitates transfer--then one would use texts in both L_1 and L_2 and compare the performance of Fi and ENG. children.

However, if as was stated at the outset of the paper, we need to specify those factors important to learning to read or the language reading development of children within a specific approach, then we must analyze wider data, collected possibly through ethnographic methods, of what is going on in the classroom during all types of language activities--as talking, writing, silent reading, teacher reading aloud, etc., within a specific program. Observations of teacher-child-other children classroom interactions will clarify for us what the learner has assimilated about the reading activity--his attitudes about purposes, about the kind of "game" this is, his expectations, his strategies, etc. In sum, we want to observe how a specific program, Fi, is affecting the linguistic awareness which the

entering learner brings to the classroom and how the program is increasing the efficiency, the pleasure, the enrichment etc. of his communication acts.

My third and most serious concern is about the question being addressed--that is, what--or what skills, are being transferred from French to English reading. The quantitative and qualitative analysis shows that the authors have essentially evaluated which of the specific rules for sound--symbol correspondence taught in L_2 are being applied in L_1 --an acquisition question.

In a cognitive interactive model, this question loses its relevance and one would ask the following question--given the child as a language user who goes about constructing his system of language--what language strategies, skills, discoveries with which he is already familiar in his native language is he applying in L_2 as compared with L_1 --in the light of instruction in a specific program.

Moreover, the authors note that "qualitative analyses of errors... suggest that there was significant transfer from French consonants to English... and significant interference...". There appears little basis on which the "significance" found in statistical analyses can be interpreted as causing "significant

transfer", etc. I would plead that the qualitative analyses be based rather on descriptions of each child's understanding of written language, through reading and writing. Data such as that obtained in the three subtests described in the "Instrument" section but not reported in the paper; "Picture Story", "Book Handling", etc. or Marie Clay's Concepts about Print activities could prove particularly informative. Analyses of Maze Test errors and type of violations these represent (given choices between specific foils) and samples of learners' writing could be used to reveal their concepts of how language works as well as their acquisitions of the conventions of print.

Having read this paper, I wish to stress the urgency of continuing investigations in the area of learning to read in L_2, French. It appears that Fl learners are taught, in many approaches used currently, to attend to the surface structure. The findings that they produce "French sounding words" is not unexpected as they are obviously putting into practice their specific learning. Certainly many of these learners have, and will continue to develop and become Readers in L_2 as has been the case in L_1 in spite of the various approaches educators followed historically. However, for those learners for whom the approach used in teaching how to read is crucial, this may not be the case. For this population we have little information on the influence of limited linguistic L_2 "baggage" on learning to read.

Historically, this kind of study reported in this paper has and is being supported. However, we are at a point in education in Canada where we should be concerned with research designs which view Reading as an interactive process whose purpose is the transfer of meaning and involves learners with specific knowledges and characteristics. Entering learners, of any age, already possess specific perceptions, attitudes, and strategies regarding learning in general, and print in particular, as well as a wealth of knowledge and skills in L_1. In the case of the L_2 learner, we must evaluate and then ensure, that he has the necessary linguistic "baggage" in L_2 to facilitate the process of anticipating, confronting, and confirming his productions as he goes about the reading task.

References

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